



ALL THINGS NEW

STEADFAST IN FAITH • FORWARD IN HOPE

PARISH WORKBOOK
ASCENSION - CHESTERFIELD

ABOUT YOUR PARISH WORKBOOK

- This parish workbook is designed to equip pastors and key parish leaders with data about the Archdiocese of St. Louis, your local planning area, and your parish.
- The data contained in this parish workbook has been gathered over the past twenty years from your parish and other parishes across the Archdiocese.
- This parish workbook should be used as an internal planning tool to help shape your reflections on the current strengths and opportunities for future growth of ministry and evangelization in the future.
- To help ensure accuracy of information, parishes are requested to limit the distribution of the information contained in this parish workbook to the pastor, parish staff, key parish leaders, and key advisory bodies. Information summarizing this data will be made available in the fall 2022 for parishioners across the Archdiocese.



ALL THINGS NEW PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son Jesus as the first Evangelizer of the Good News.

Send forth the power of the Holy Spirit upon the Church of St. Louis and grant us the gift of true discernment so we may do your will in all things.

Help us be totally free to follow wherever you lead us, totally generous to be good stewards of your many gifts, and totally passionate to suffer all in order to be more closely united to you.

Commissioned by your Son and empowered by the Spirit to “Go and Make Disciples of all Nations,” strengthen us by the power of your grace as we bring the Good News of Salvation into the lives of all those we touch, so that individual hearts and all of society may be converted to you and all things might be made new.

Inspired by the apostolic zeal of previous generations, as we begin the process of planning for the future, may our only desire be to do all things for the greater glory and honor of your name and for the good of your people in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



GUIDING TEXTS

REV. 21:3-5

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, the old order has passed away.”

The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Then he said, “Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true.”





GUIDING TEXTS EVANGELII NUNTIANDI (#18)

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new."

But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel.





GUIDING TEXTS JOY OF THE GOSPEL (#27)

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.



STRATEGIC PASTORAL PLANNING INITIATIVE OUTCOME

Develop a plan that will make all things new enabling a vibrant Catholic presence in every square mile of the Archdiocese of St. Louis for the next century

A Renewed Church

Gospel renewal in our parishes, schools, and other ministry efforts

A Renewed Mission

Enhance our evangelization efforts to those on the margins of society

A Vibrant Future

Secure a vibrant future for the Church of St. Louis



STRATEGIC PASTORAL PLANNING INITIATIVE

GOALS

1. **Unceasing Prayer.** Engage all individual Catholics to reflect upon the need for Jesus Christ in their daily lives and call upon the Holy Spirit to guide our actions to fully share the love of the Lord in every encounter.
2. **Unifying Vision.** Articulate and implement a vision for evangelization that empowers and expects every baptized Catholic to spread the Gospel message and ensures a Catholic presence in every square mile of the Archdiocese of St. Louis through missionary outreach, parish and school footprint, and dynamic leadership.
3. **Intentional Stewardship.** Define and develop a plan that will appropriately reallocate resources throughout the Archdiocese of St. Louis that will be supported by structures at the diocesan, parish, school, and agency levels to ensure long-term viability and vibrancy of the Catholic presence.



ALL THINGS NEW TIMELINE





ALL THINGS NEW

STEADFAST IN FAITH • FORWARD IN HOPE

OUR DIOCESE
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

ABOUT OUR DIOCESE

- The Archdiocese of St. Louis is 178 parishes encompassing the City of St. Louis and 10 surrounding counties – a large and diverse territory: urban, suburban and rural.
- Our local church has been declining for several decades as older Catholics die and there are insufficient number of young Catholics to take their place.
- This is best exemplified by the significant decline in the number of births and baptisms in our diocese.
- As our Catholic population has moved from the city to the near suburbs and from the near suburbs to the farther out suburbs, this has resulted in too few priests in large parishes and too many priests in small parishes.
- Our diocesan priests are aging and number of priests to serve our Catholic population is declining.
- Over the past decade, Mass attendance has been on a steady decline. The long-term implications of COVID are unknown, but the rebound in Mass attendance from 2020 to 2021 still leaves us 25% below pre-COVID levels.



OUR TERRITORY FOR EVANGELIZATION



OUR CATHOLIC POPULATION CONTINUES TO DECLINE

- In 2021, the number of Catholics in the Archdiocese of St. Louis dipped below 500,000 for first time since the 1960s.
- We have more baptisms than funerals and we have nearly 1,000 enter the church each year. Our numbers should be growing by 2,000 per year.
- As many as 5,000 Catholics are “leaving” the Church – OR – not re-engaging in the Church after high school or college.



OUR CATHOLIC POPULATION IS AGING RESULTING IN FEWER YOUNG PEOPLE

The Landscape in the United States

- In the last decade, the percentage of the adult population claiming no religious affiliation (the “nones”) grew from 17% to 26%.
- In the last decade, the percentage of the millennial population claiming no religious affiliation grew from 27% to 40%.

The Landscape in the Archdiocese of St. Louis

Our baptism and marriage trends reflect the national landscape, as they are half of what they were 20 years ago.



WEEKLY SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE CONTINUES TO DECLINE

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mass attendance was declining between 0.5% to 1% per year.
- Mass attendance hit a record low in October 2020 which is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While Mass attendance in October 2021 showed a significant increase from 2020, it was still 25% lower than Mass attendance in October 2019.
- In 2019, only 33% of our pews were occupied during the typical weekend Mass. By 2021, only 25% of our pews were occupied during the typical weekend Mass.



FEWER BAPTISMS HAVE RESULTED IN FEWER CHILDREN IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PSR

- Though we educate a higher percentage of children in our Catholic schools than nearly any other diocese (37%), enrollment continues to decline.
- During the last decade, PSR enrollment has declined faster than day school enrollment.
- Our current model of Catholic elementary schools cannot continue.
 - Only 40-50% of our elementary school children live in the boundaries of their parish school.
 - The cost to educate our students continues to outpace tuition increases.
 - Parish investment in our schools continues to absorb an increasing percentage of parish funds available to support other parish ministries.



OUR PRIESTS ARE AGING

- 35% of our diocesan priests (74 priests) serving in parishes are 65 years of age or older.
- These 74 priests could retire in the next 10 years.
- Though priests' retirement age is 75, the average of retirement for our diocesan priests has been 71.
- By 2026, we will have fewer diocesan priests to serve in parishes than the number of parishes we have.
- Our largest parishes will still need to be served by 2-3 priests.



* Excluding retired priests resident in parishes



OUR FINITE RESOURCES NEED TO BE REALIGNED TO ENABLE VIBRANT MINISTRY



Number of Priests *	49	46	38	27	50
Ratio of Parishioners to Priests	619	1,416	1,996	2,704	3,411

* Includes diocesan and religious order priests



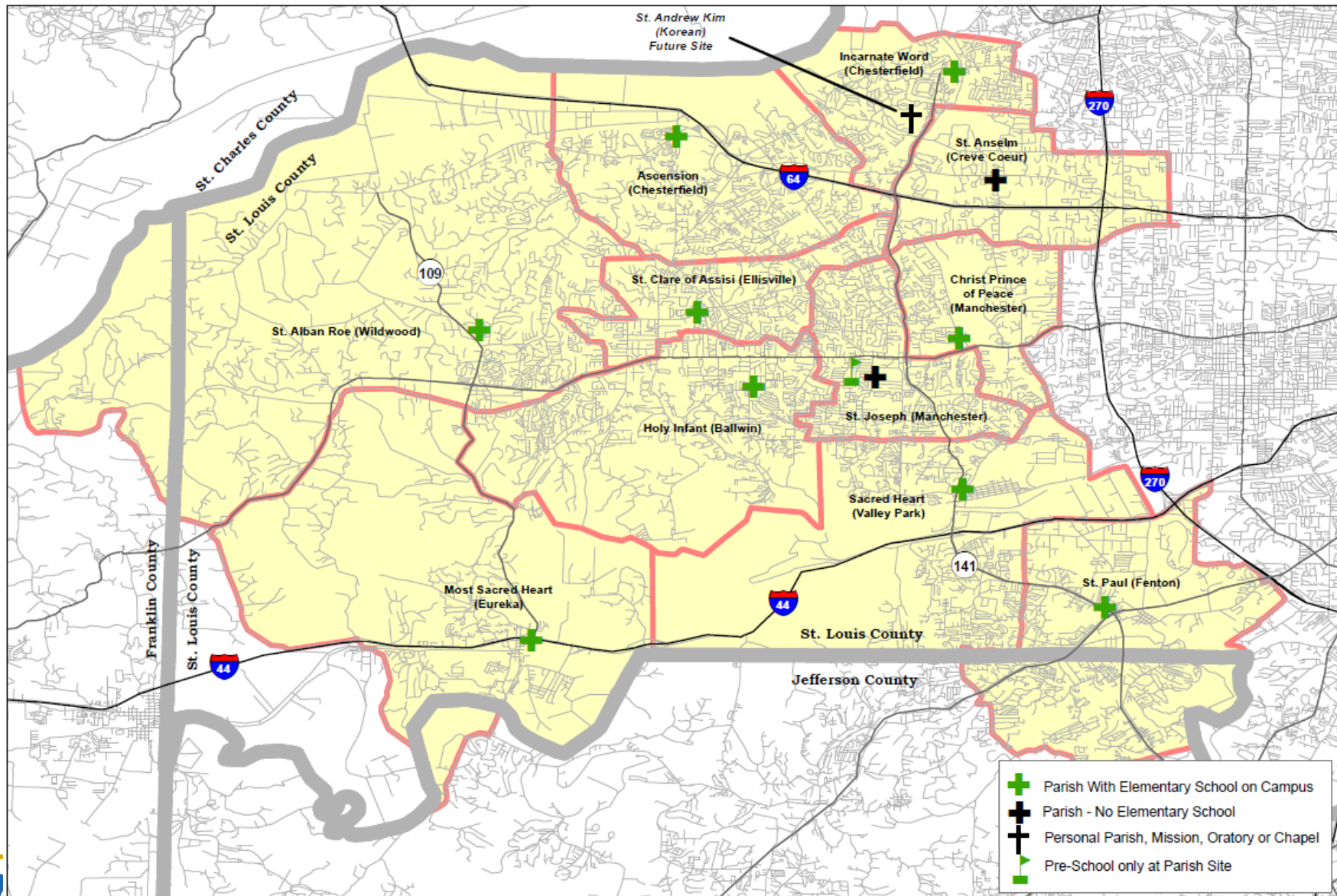


ALL THINGS NEW

STEADFAST IN FAITH • FORWARD IN HOPE

OUR PLANNING AREA
PLANNING AREA #8

OUR TERRITORY FOR EVANGELIZATION



ABOUT OUR PLANNING AREA

- The planning area is primarily in western St. Louis County. The geography of this area is defined by three Interstates (64, 44, and 270), Highways 109 and 141 and the Missouri River to the northwest and Jefferson County to the south.
- It is the West County deanery with the addition of St. Paul from the South County deanery. There are 11 territorial parishes and 1 personal parish. 9 elementary schools are in this planning area. Currently there are 21 diocesan and 3 order priests assigned to this group.
- Churches on the eastern side have parishes within 5 miles of each other in the northeast and southeast sections. Ascension, St. Clare, and Holy Infant are within 3-4 miles and also within short drives to nearby churches to the east. Three churches in the western part of the planning area are 7-8 miles apart, but linked by major roadways.



OUR PLANNING AREA IS AFFLUENT AND IS AGING

- Total population in the planning area in the 2020 census was 255,008 which was up 3% from 2010.
- The population is aging with the percent of the population 55 or older rising from 20% in 2000 to 34% in 2020.
- 29% of the population is registered Catholic, which is higher than the Diocesan average of 18%.
- Median household income in the area is \$102,375, significantly above the archdiocesan average of \$60,700.



OUR PLANNING AREA DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

(U.S. Census Data)	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>
Population	200,233	239,836	246,996	255,008
Percent Change		20%	3%	3%
Households	69,545	87,783	94,371	98,515
Percent Change		26%	8%	4%
Population				
White	191,843	223,569	221,525	209,239
Percent of Total	96%	93%	90%	82%
Black	3,259	4,097	5,486	6,606
Percent of Total	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other/Multi-Race	5,131	12,170	19,985	39,163
Percent of Total	3%	5%	8%	15%
Hispanic (not a race)	2,042	3,514	6,110	9,162
Percent of Total	1%	1%	2%	4%
% of Population Age 55+	17%	20%	28%	34%

2020 Data	
% of Households - Renters	19%
% of Households - Single Person Living Alone	24%

Median Household Income	
Planning Area	\$ 102,375
Archdiocese	\$ 60,700

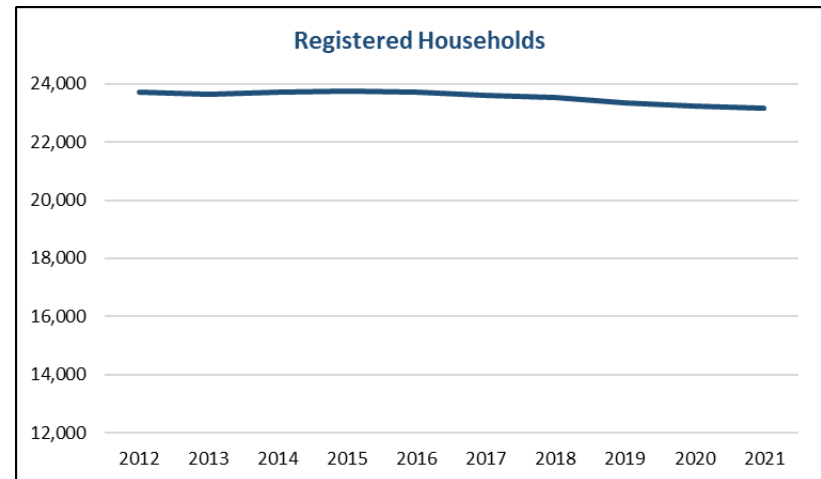
2021 Data	
% of Population Registered Catholic	
Planning Area	29%
Archdiocese	18%
No. of Catholic School Children in Planning Area	2,394
2017-2021 (Five-Year Average)	
% 8th Grade Students to Catholic High Schools	79%



OUR PLANNING AREA SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS

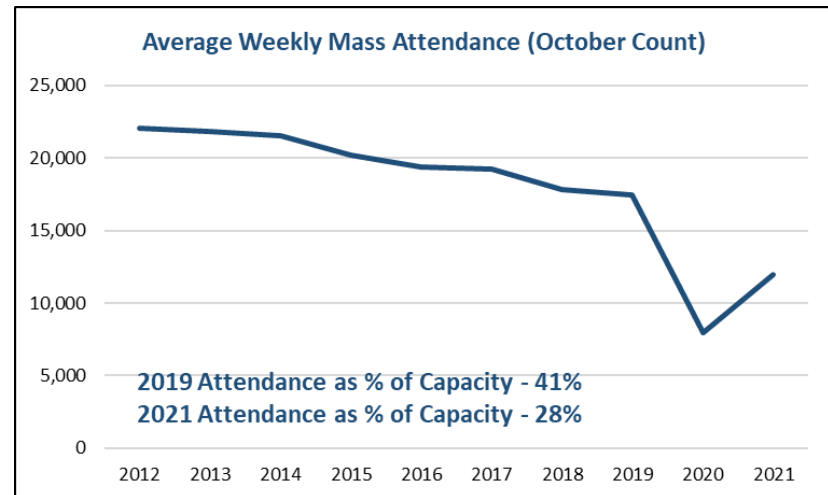
- Registered households in the planning area declined slightly by 2% during the past decade, compared to a decline of 7% for the diocese.



OUR PLANNING AREA SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

MASS ATTENDANCE

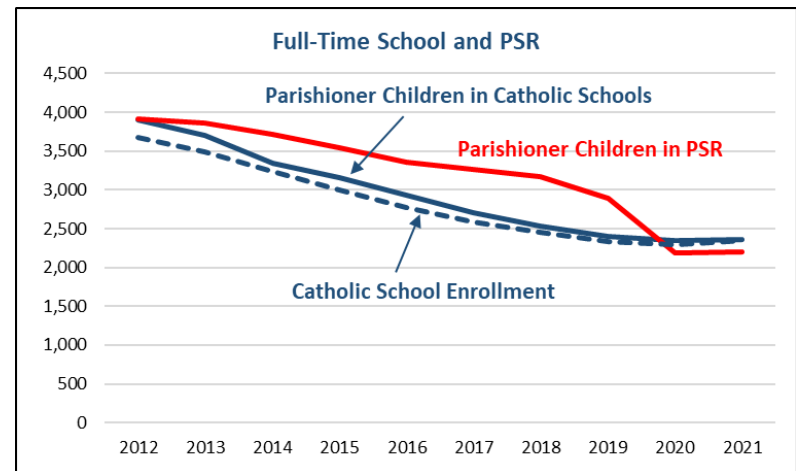
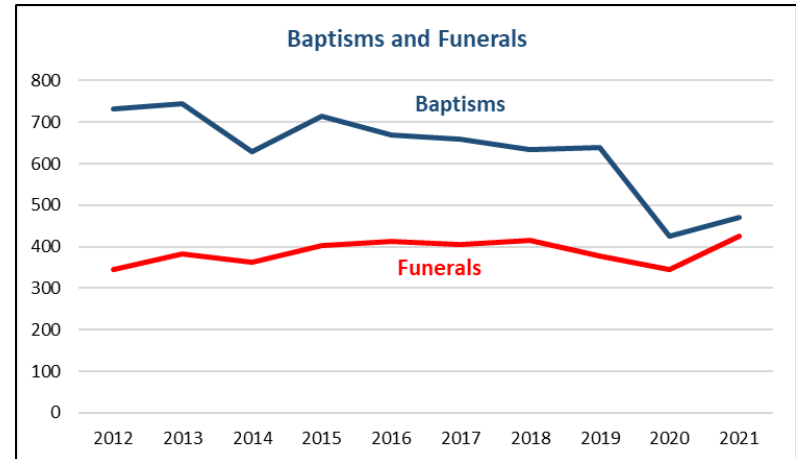
- Mass attendance declined 33% during the decade, compared to a 30% decline for the archdiocese.
- Mass attendance as percent of capacity was above the archdiocesan average of 35% in 2019 and 25% in 2021.



OUR PLANNING AREA SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

BAPTISMS, FUNERALS, & K-8 FORMATION

- A decade ago there were twice as many baptisms as funerals. COVID has impacted baptisms, which have declined to near the level of funerals.
- Catholic school enrollment declined over the decade by 36% compared to a 22% for the archdiocese.
- PSR enrollment declined by about the same amount as the diocese as a whole.
- The planning areas sees Catholic choose PSR at about the same rate as Catholic schools, while in the dioceses as a whole, Catholics tend to prefer Catholic schools to PSR.



OUR PLANNING AREA

MINISTRY TRENDS

	Registered Parishioner Households		Number of Catholics	Weekend Mass Attendance		Church Capacity	Baptisms	Funerals	Parishioner Children in:	
							Five Year Average 2017-2021		Catholic Schools (Include Privates)	Traditional PSR
	2011	2021	2021	2019	2021				2021-22	2021-22
Ascension (Chesterfield)	2,947	2,808	8,380	2,328	1,702	650	63	53	387	361
Christ Prince of Peace (Manchester)	1,190	1,242	3,830	990	679	650	31	18	190	92
Holy Infant (Ballwin)	2,874	2,999	9,825	1,950	1,458	850	80	49	432	303
Incarnate Word (Chesterfield)	2,010	2,060	5,920	1,859	1,491	600	54	39	347	143
Most Sacred Heart (Eureka)	1,139	1,330	4,390	961	631	522	48	20	150	225
Sacred Heart (Valley Park)	2,619	2,511	7,670	1,761	1,062	710	51	34	198	209
St. Alban of Roe (Wildwood)	2,352	2,260	7,580	1,621	798	725	36	20	210	230
St. Andrew Kim - Korean	105	87	162	87	58	187	0	1	0	0
St. Anselm (Creve Coeur)	1,005	1,015	2,805	864	571	700	28	26	38	63
St. Clare of Assisi (Ellisville)	2,161	2,038	5,690	1,815	1,404	750	43	52	210	113
St. Joseph (Manchester)	2,930	2,679	8,200	1,683	1,085	800	89	44	27	279
St. Paul (Fenton)	2,310	2,140	5,800	1,545	1,061	700	42	38	174	178
TOTAL	23,642	23,169	70,252	17,464	12,001		566	394	2,363	2,196



OUR PLANNING AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IS DECLINING

- The nine elementary schools in this planning area have 2,348 children enrolled in Catholic elementary schools, down 15% from 5 years ago. Three schools have under 200 students.
- Schools draw heavily from outside their parish boundaries, with every school having more than 40% of its students coming from outside of the parish territory.
- The number of students going to Catholic elementary schools from the parishes in the planning area is 2,363.
- There are 2,196 students enrolled in PSR in 2021, down 35% from 5 years earlier.



OUR PLANNING AREA

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRENDS

	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22 vs 2016-17	2021-22	2021-22
	Enrollment (K-8)	Enrollment (Pre-K) PK 3-4 & PK 4-5	5 Year Percent Change in (K-8) Enrollment	% K-8 Students Registered in Parish	% K-8 Students Living in Parish Boundaries
Ascension - Chesterfield	377	77	25%	93%	57%
Christ, Prince of Peace - Manchester	184	40	(9%)	96%	46%
Holy Infant - Ballwin	420	68	(6%)	98%	56%
Incarnate Word - Chesterfield	366	0	3%	89%	35%
Most Sacred Heart - Eureka	164	33	4%	88%	46%
Sacred Heart - Valley Park	207	49	(25%)	91%	59%
St. Alban Roe School	198	28	(35%)	97%	52%
St. Clare of Assisi - Ellisville	201	38	(29%)	96%	44%
St. Paul - Fenton	231	48	(13%)	74%	45%
TOTAL (% Change includes schools that closed)	2,348	381	(15%)	n/a	n/a





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OUR PARISH
ASCENSION - CHESTERFIELD

ABOUT OUR PARISH

- Ascension parish began as the mission of St. Anthony in Centaur Station, located on the Missouri River and founded in 1908. As parishioners began to move into the area to the east of Centaur, the need for a mission church arose. This became the “little church” built in 1924 that is still on the parish property (see picture to the right). Over time, the Ascension area grew and the Centaur area declined and in 1941, Ascension became the parish and St. Anthony became the mission (which finally closed in 1946). The parish has grown to be the 5th largest in the diocese. And while being the 9th most affluent area in the diocese, Ascension parishioners have donated the most money to the Annual Catholic Appeal of any parish. The parish school opened in 1941.
- The current parish church was built in 1977 and seats 650.
- The parish has 2800 households and 377 students in the parish school.



ABOUT OUR PARISH

- Parish area will start growing as new condos and villas/apartments are being built. Area is aging and becoming more diverse.
- Parish has declining membership, baptisms, and PSR enrollment with growing school enrollment. Mass attendance has been declining during the decade.
- Parish financials are strong with growing offertory and reserves, and investment in parish school has been brought within the recommended range in the last several years.



OUR PARISH AREA IS STILL GROWING, BECOMING MORE DIVERSE AND AGING

- Parish area has been growing slightly, but more diverse as the percent white has declined from 93% to 75% in the last 30 years. Expect growth in the next few years as new apartments and villas are being built in the area.
- The area is aging as the percent of the population over age 55 has increased from 15% in 1990 to 38% in 2020.
- Median household income is \$121,400 which is well above the archdiocesan average of \$60,700
- 29% of the resident population is Catholic which is well above the archdiocesan average of 18%.



OUR PARISH

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

(U.S. Census Data)	1990	2000	2010	2020
Population	25,169	28,464	29,300	30,177
Percent Change		13%	3%	3%
Households	8,631	10,857	11,695	12,031
Percent Change		26%	8%	3%
Population				
White	23,512	25,869	25,407	22,736
Percent of Total	93%	91%	87%	75%
Black	674	504	654	783
Percent of Total	3%	2%	2%	3%
Other/Multi-Race	984	2,091	3,239	6,658
Percent of Total	4%	7%	11%	22%
Hispanic (not a race)	301	452	816	1,120
Percent of Total	1%	2%	3%	4%
% of Population Age 55+	15%	24%	34%	38%

2020 Data	
% of Households - Renters	22%
% of Households - Single Person Living Alone	26%

Median Household Income

Parish Area	\$ 121,423
Archdiocese	\$ 60,700

2021 Data	
% of Population Registered Catholic	
Parish Area	29%
Archdiocese	18%
No. of Catholic School Children in Parish Area	339

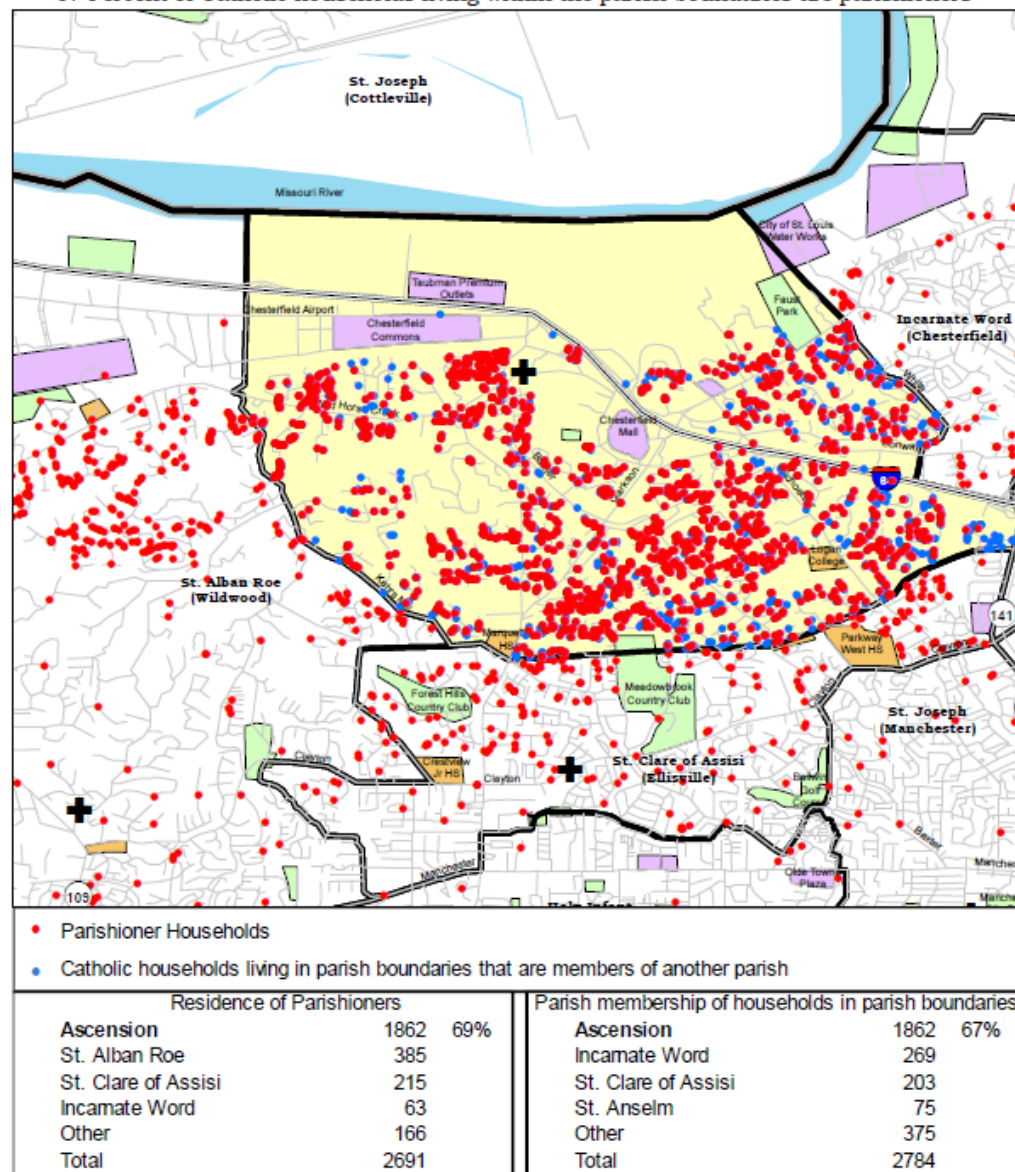
2017-2021 (Five-Year Average)	
% 8th Grade Students to Catholic High Schools	87%



WHERE OUR PARISHIONERS & CATHOLICS LIVE

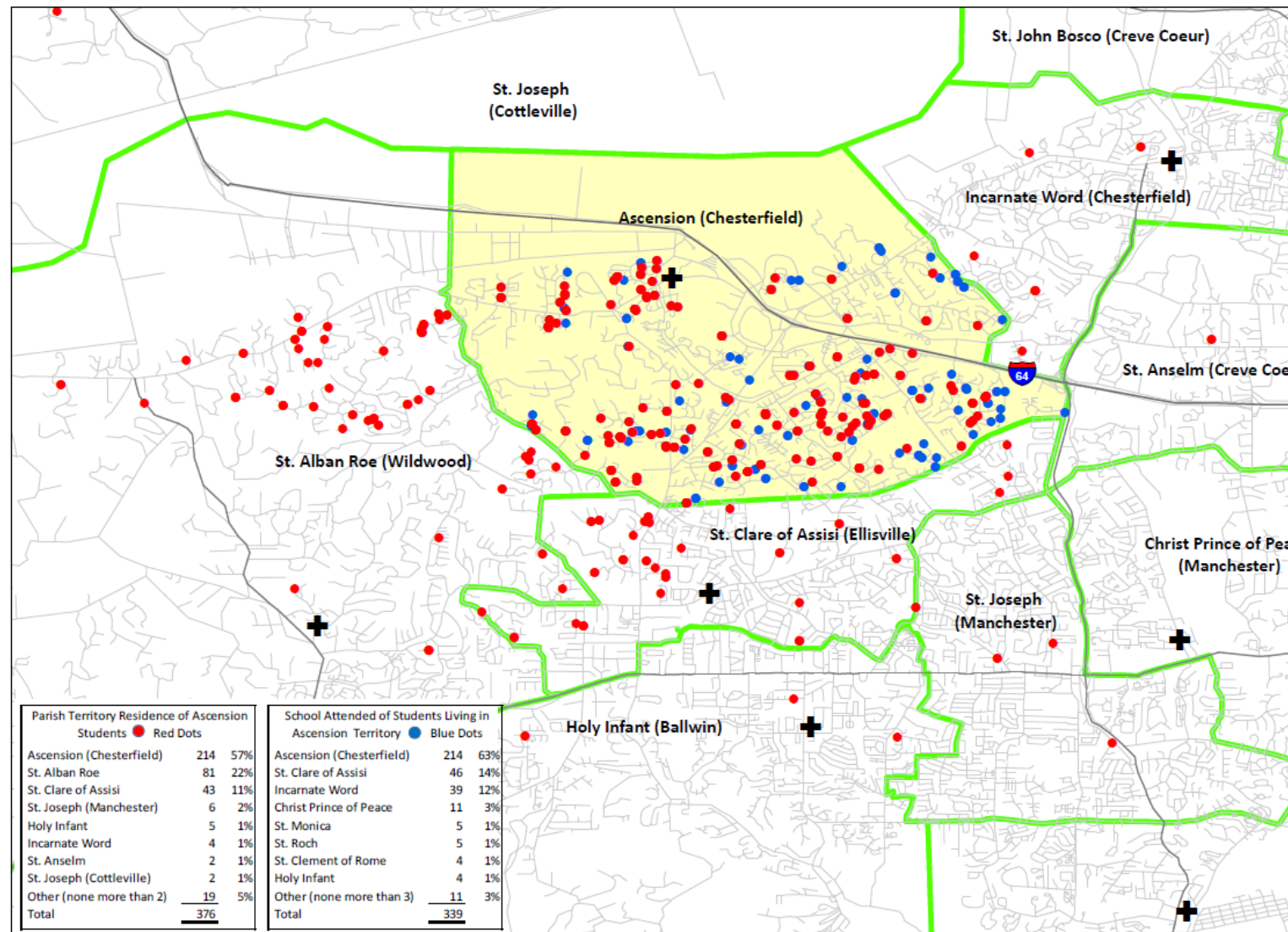
- Red dots are parishioner households; blue dots are Catholic households that are registered at a different parish.
- There are just about as many parishioner households (2691) as there are Catholic households in the boundaries (2784).
- This means that just about as many Catholic households come into the parish from outside the boundaries than leave the parish area to affiliate elsewhere.

69 Percent of parishioner households live within the parish boundaries
67 Percent of Catholic households living within the parish boundaries are parishioners



WHERE CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS LIVE

Ascension (Chesterfield) - Residence of Students (K-8)
2021-22



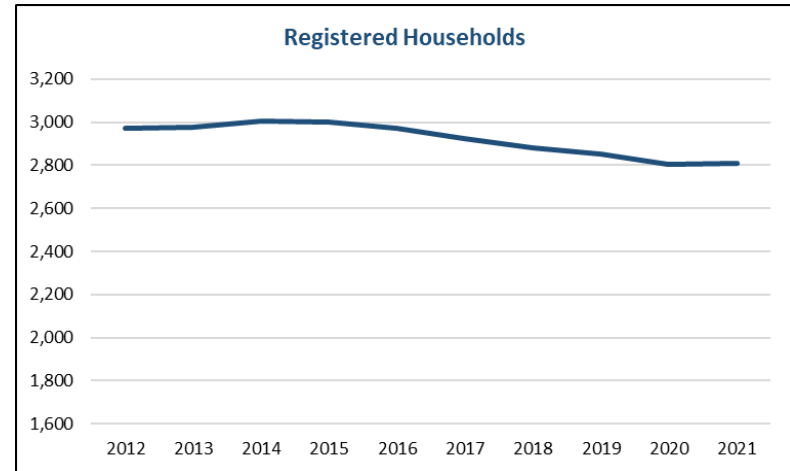
- It is surprising how much cross boundary school enrollment there is given that the three parishes that border Ascension all have parish schools.



OUR PARISH SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS

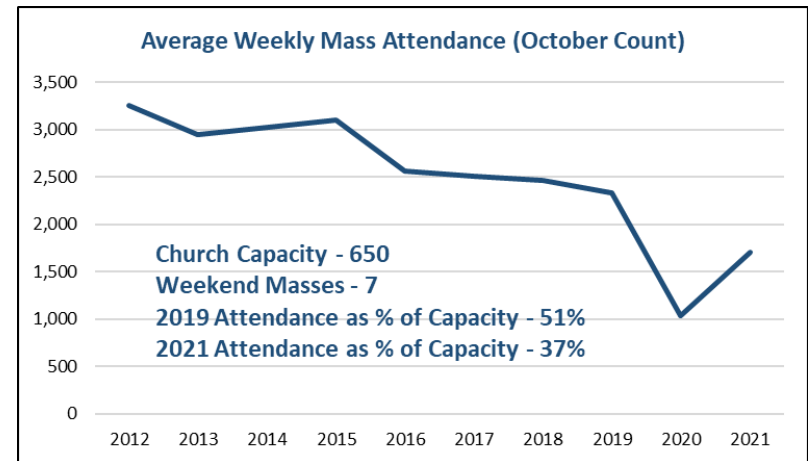
- After growing to 3000 households, parish membership has been declining in the last five years.



OUR PARISH SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

MASS ATTENDANCE

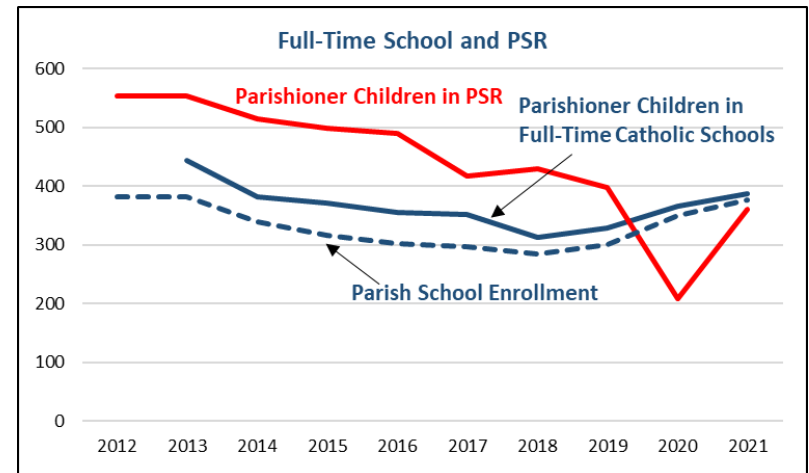
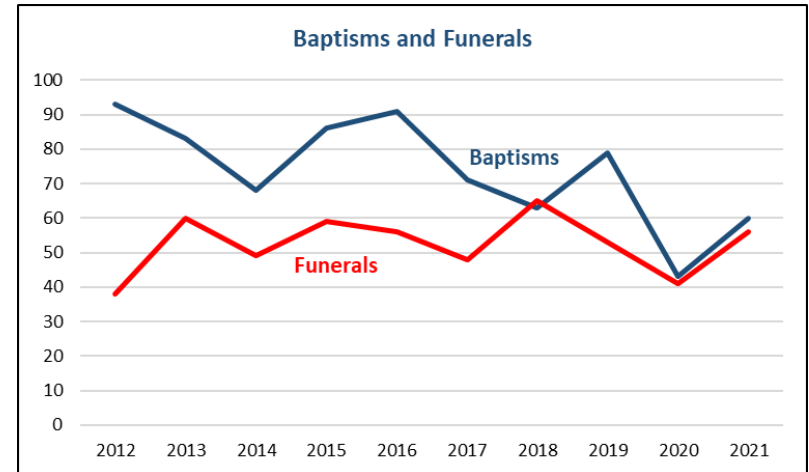
- Pre-COVID Mass attendance had been on a decline.
- Mass attendance as percent of capacity is much higher than the archdiocesan average of 33% in 2019 and 25% in 2021.
- Pre-COVID Mass attendance as percent of registered parishioners was 27-29%, the same as archdiocesan average of 27-29%.



OUR PARISH SACRAMENTAL TRENDS

BAPTISMS, FUNERALS, & K-8 RELIGIOUS FORMATION

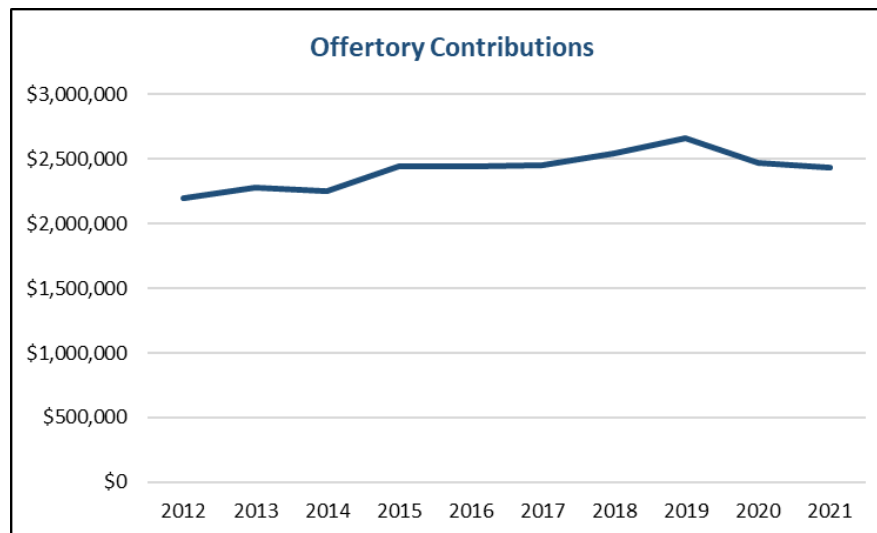
- Baptisms remain strong though on a modestly declining trend. Enrollment in day school has been growing the last few years, while PSR enrollment has declined the entire decade.
- 87% of day school graduates attend a Catholic high school.



OUR PARISH FINANCIAL TRENDS

OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTIONS

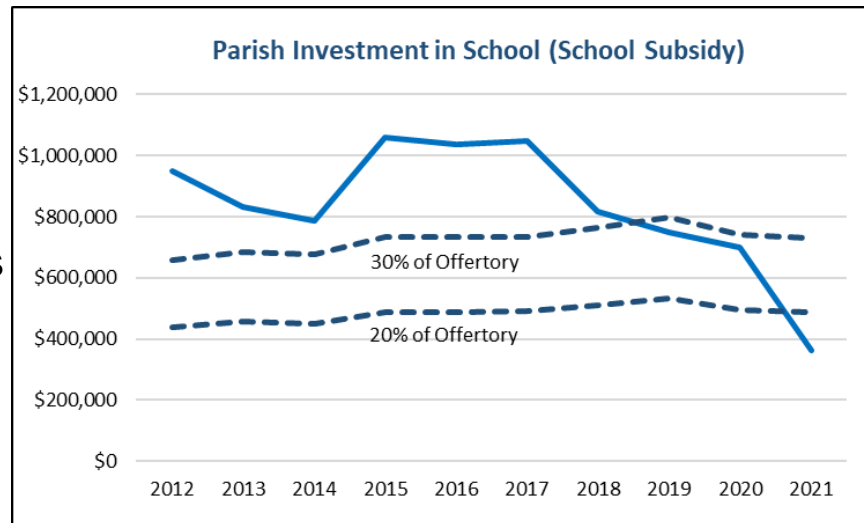
- Offertory contributions have been growing during the decade.



OUR PARISH FINANCIAL TRENDS

INVESTMENT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- For years, parish investment in the school had been above the recommended 20-30% of offertory. In the last 4 years, parish investment has been reduced to within the recommended limit.



OUR PARISH FINANCIAL TRENDS

PARISH FINANCIAL CONDITION

- Revenues have usually covered expenses resulting in stable reserves.

